

# Timp Hike Included Rare Look at Mountain Goat

By DAVID and  
CYNTHIA WANKASKY  
Special to The Herald

Autumn in Utah is simply a hiker's paradise. Leaf strewn trails, trees and bushes of every color imaginable.

With a sense of urgency, we head for the mountains every weekend, afraid it might be our last mountain hike before the snow comes.

Amid weather reports of impending storms, on Saturday, Oct. 5, we decide this just might really be our last chance to hike to the summit of Mt. Timpanogos until next summer.

We pack up the usual gear — camera, sandwiches, sweaters and our trusty walking sticks, and head

for Timpanooke campground, where the trail begins. Getting a late start, we realize it's over 18 miles to the summit and back, and likely we'll be coming down in the dark, so we hustled.

After several hours we circled around the basin and then started up the last group of switchbacks, joking as we went about it looking more like goat country than people country, with all the peaks and ledges. Then, just as we came around one of the switchbacks, we were face to face with two very real, and seemingly very large, Rocky Mountain goats, which happened to be coming down the same trail we were on.

You might recall back in 1981, in Rocky Mountain goats were trans-

enjoying this rare sight, we realized it didn't seem like he had any intention of giving up the trail. As we inched forward, he would run a few steps towards us, making sure we kept our distance. This game went on for 20 minutes, which is just about long enough to get good and cold at that elevation.

He must have tired of this seesaw game, as he finally left the trail to do some grazing. We passed, rather quickly, and completed

our climb to the summit.

What an amazing feeling, to stand at the top of that mountain and look down on our valley. Words can't describe it.

It was quite a day, a great way to end the hiking season. We did come down in the dark, but it wasn't as lonely as you might think... we found ourselves literally face to face with four moose, coming up the trail. Too bad it was too dark for pictures!



This mountain billy goat blocked the trail for 20 minutes.



David Wankasky inches close to a rare wilderness sight.



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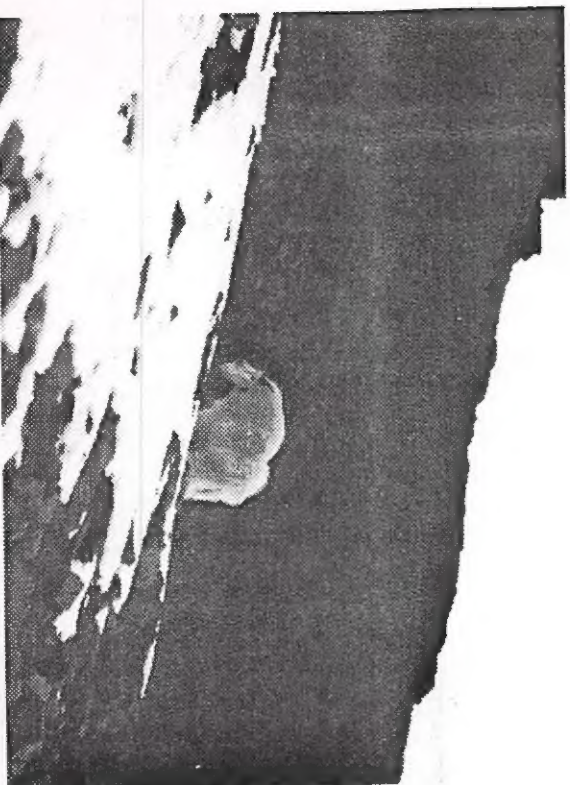
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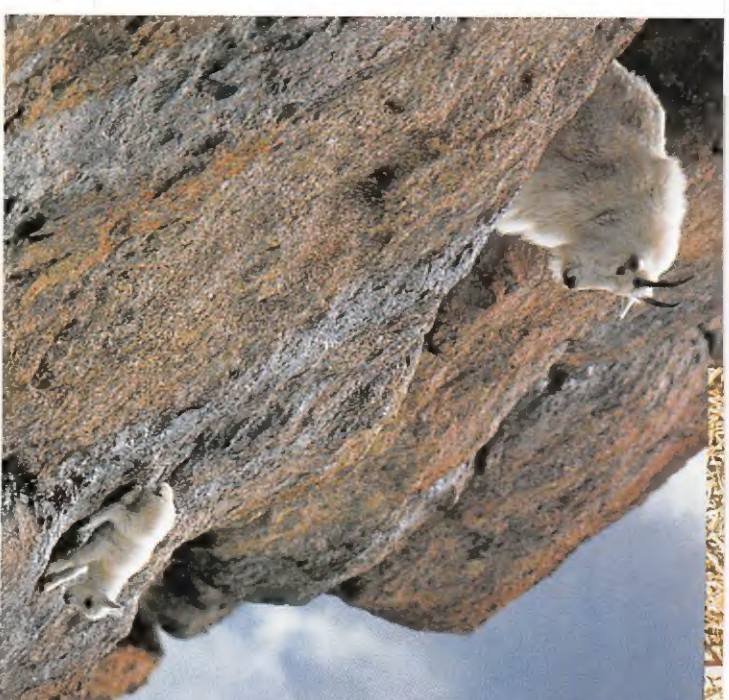
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Testing its still-unsteady legs, a mountain goat kid makes its way down a steep incline under the watchful

eye of its mother. Before long it will be leaping as far as ten feet from one lofty ledge to another.



# Rocky Mountain goats get new home in Uintas

Last week, eight Rocky Mountain goats, residents of the Hidden Peak area in Little Cottonwood Canyon, got new homes. They were netted, tested and trucked to an area in the Uintas.

Steve Phillips, information officer for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, said the goats — 6 nannies and 2 billies — were captured using a new "net gun" for catching animals.

A special helicopter designed for high-altitude work located the animals, which were then netted. Once grounded, biologists tested, treated and placed radio collars on the animals. They were then loaded into trucks and driven to the Hayden Peak/Bald Mountain area and released.

According to U.S. Forest Service officials, who assisted in the project, this is not an attempt to start a new herd of goats but to reestablish the animals.

A Forest Service report from the Uintas back in 1917 told of bighorn sheep and Rocky Mountain goats in the area. It is believed both animals were hunted out by trappers and miners.

The herd was originally put on the north side of the canyon back in 1967. It wasn't until 1974, however, that they were spotted again, this time on the southern side of the canyon. Biologists believe the herd may consist of 75 or more animals now.

Three years ago, a second group of goats was brought in from Washington and planted in the Timpanogos area. Last year, in the first trapping project in Utah, animals from the Hidden Peak unit were caught and moved to an area east of Beaver.

Game managers said the Uinta release area is ideal for the goats and added that the area may be able to support a herd of about 200 goats. They also believe that within five years hunting permits may be issued there.

Money for the transplant, and the one last year, came from the state's Big Game Enhancement Fund. Money for the program comes from direct donations made by hunters through the resident Big Game Application. Hunters failing to draw out on a special tag can donate all or part of their refund.

— Ray Grass